

MEMORANDUM FOR:

11476

Chromo  
29 Jun 83

Here is the item for the DCI's  
PFIAB presentation. I hope  
it fills the bill!

Hans

NIO/AL

Date 6/28/83

SRM 101 USE PREVIOUS  
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30 June 1983

Recent Developments on the "Yellow Rain" Issue

In spite of the overwhelming weight of intelligence evidence that has been officially released concerning CW/Toxin Use in Southeast Asia and Afghanistan, the public debate on the issue continues, much of it revolving around the question of the conclusiveness of the scientific findings on the "what" and "how" of Yellow Rain.

The most significant new development this year is what appears to be a striking reduction in the incidence of chemical attacks since the beginning of 1983. Reports of such attacks--including lethal events--continue to be received, but, for the most part these relate to events of an earlier period, principally mid-to-late 1982. Moreover, the few instances of chemical attacks reportedly occurring in 1983--less than a half dozen--refer to the use of riot control agents and incapacitants rather than lethal agents. In spite of a high level of combat activity in all three theaters--Laos, Kampuchea, and Afghanistan-

[redacted] not a single lethal chemical attack has been confirmed as having occurred so far this year. Also, in this same period, the classic symptomology of mycotoxicosis is entirely absent, as is any positive finding of mycotoxin presence in environmental and biological samples collected from chemical events occurring this year.

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While an hiatus of five months is insufficient to permit strong conclusions (seasonal lulls of two or three months have been noted in earlier years and there are often substantial time lags between occurrence of a chemical event and its detection), the fact that the current break is unprecedentedly long and is taking place during a period of relatively intense combat activity suggests the possibility that a Soviet policy decision to suspend the use of lethal chemical/toxin agents may have been taken.

The attached draft SWDR article discusses the specific evidence for these findings.

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